

REMARKS

Upon entry of the present amendment, Claims 1-20 are pending in the application, of which claims 1, 9, and 17 are independent. Applicant has added new claims 17-20 herein.

The above-identified Office Action has been reviewed, the references carefully considered, and the Examiner's comments carefully weighed. In view thereof, the present Amendment is submitted. It is contended that by the present amendment, all bases of rejection set forth in the Office Action have been traversed and overcome. Accordingly, reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection is respectfully requested.

After careful consideration of the objections and rejections set forth in the Office Action, applicant respectfully submits that as amended, claims 1-20 patentably distinguish over the art of record, and requests allowance of all pending claims, as discussed further below.

In the Drawings:

The applicant appreciates notification that figures 6a, 6b as filed with the application are the wrong figures, and that figure 6c was missing from the papers filed with the application. The enclosed sheet of amended drawings includes changes to FIG. 6. This sheet, which includes FIG. 6a, 6b, and 6c, replaces the original sheet including 6a and 6b. The original sheet including 6a and 6b includes drawing figures unrelated to the present application, and was mistakenly substituted for the correct drawing sheet at the time of filing.

The substitute sheet amending FIG. 6 herein is fully supported by the set of drawing figures associated with the application's priority document, and by the figure description found in the BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS section of the application. Moreover, the

priority document was effectively incorporated by reference by the priority claim in the application, under new regulation 37 CFR 1.57(a). Therefore, no new matter has been added by the submission of this drawing sheet.

In the Claims:

Claim rejections – 35 USC 112

In the above-identified Office Action, claims 4 and 8 were rejected under 35 USC 112, second paragraph, as indefinite, since the phrase “said watercraft” has no proper antecedent basis. Claims 4 and 8 have been amended herein to change the phrase “said watercraft” to “said small vessel body” to correspond to the language of the independent claim. Claims 4 and 8 are now definite in form, and in compliance with the requirements of 35 USC 112.

Claim rejections – 35 USC 102

Also in the above-identified Office Action, Claims 1-16 were rejected under 35 USC 102 (b) as anticipated by Futaki (5,240,443). The Examiner stated that Futaki discloses a conduit supporting structure 29 comprising a block of foam material arranged to fit the contours of the interior space of the watercraft, and that the block includes conduits 35 for supportively receiving cables.

The applicant respectfully disagrees with this rejection since Futaki does not disclosed the recited feature of the floatation insertion block including a *groove formed therein* for supporting a hose or wire, as recited by the applicant in claims 1 and 9. Upon review of this reference, the applicant notes that the conduits 35 disclosed by Futaki are separate elongate hollow bodies

embedded within through-holes formed in the foam body 29, as described in col. 4, lines 50-54, and as seen in figures 8 and 9. The fuel and oil lines disclosed by Futaki are inserted within conduits 35 so as to pass through foam body 29 to other parts of the watercraft.

This is quite different from the structure disclosed by the applicant in which a groove, or channel, is formed in the surface of foam body for supportively receiving and guiding a pipe or wire. Thus, the pipe or wire is directly in contact with the surface of, and supported by, the foam body. The gas line disclosed by Futaki is disposed within a hollow body, which is in turn in contact with the foam body. In addition, the applicant's support structure comprises a groove that opens to an outer surface of the foam body, so that the conduit may be easily inserted or removed from the resilient supportive groove.

The applicant submits that a groove is depression within in a surface. The grooves disclosed by the applicant in Fig 6 extend to some depth within the foam body, and consist of a portion of the exterior surface which is continuous with and extends inward from the periphery of the foam body such that the portion of the exterior surface which forms the groove is in communication with the exterior of the foam body along the entire length of the groove. The applicant further submits that a groove is very distinct from a through-hole, which is not open to the exterior along its length, but only at the terminal ends thereof.

Moreover, applicant has amended the language of each of the independent claims to specify that the support groove is open on one side thereof to permit insertion or removal of the conduit.

This limitation is clearly supported by the original specification and drawings, including paragraphs 38 and 39 of the specification.

In a brief telephone discussion on October 19, 2004, the Examiner indicated that this new

limitation appeared to distinguish over the teachings of Futaki, which teaches surrounding the conduits with foam, which is preferably foamed in place within the watercraft.

Since Futaki discloses a through hole rather than a groove, the applicant traverses the rejection and considers claims 1-16 in condition for allowance.

Other Matters

New independent claim 17 and dependent claims 18-20 have been added to the application to more clearly recite the structure of the groove with respect to the exterior surface of the floatable insert. All new claims are fully supported by the specification, and no new matter has been added to the application.

Conclusion

Based on all of the foregoing, applicant respectfully submits that all of the objections and rejections set forth in the Office Action are overcome, and that as presently amended, all of the pending claims are believed to be allowable over all of the references of record, whether considered singly or in combination.

Applicant requests reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection of record, and allowance of the pending claims.

If the Examiner is not fully convinced of all of the claims now in the application, applicant respectfully requests that he telephonically contact applicant's undersigned representative to expeditiously resolve prosecution of the application.

Favorable consideration is respectfully requested.

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CERTIFICATE OF FACSIMILE TRANSMISSION

I hereby certify that this correspondence is being transmitted, via facsimile, to Examining Group 3617 of the United States Patent and Trademark Office on November 19, 2004, at the number (703) 872-9306.

WDB/kmm

